

# MENNONITE HISTORICAL BULLETIN

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## Joseph Summers—1823-1892

(As editor of the *Words of Cheer* from March, 1878, to August, 1892, Joseph Summers endeared himself to a generation of Mennonite youth who read his paper and who from time to time sent their letters to "Uncle Joseph." His interests were not limited to journalism, for at the time of his death, he was serving as treasurer of the Mennonite Evangelizing Fund, the forerunner of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities. Below is part of his obituary as it appeared in the *Herald of Truth*, September 15, 1892, p. 286.—M.G.)

### OBITUARY OF JOSEPH SUMMERS

JOSEPH SUMMERS, son of Jacob and Leah Summers, was born on the 11th of October, 1823, in Lancaster Co., Pa. He began to teach school in his 17th year. He attended the Strasburg

Academy for two years and then resumed his work as teacher in which vocation he achieved much success. On the 8th of December, 1846, he was united in matrimony to Barbara Souders by Bish. Christian Herr. On the 15th of March, 1847, he moved to Holmes Co., Ohio, settling on a farm near Millersburg. He lived there 17 years dividing his time between farming and teaching. He also made two trips to California. In the spring of 1850 he and twelve other men from Zanesville, Ohio, organized the Zanesville Mining Co., and on the 28th of March he left home with teams and wagons, going by way of Cincinnati, St. Louis, Salt Lake City and San Francisco. He arrived at Dry Town, Cal., Oct. 23. A great part of this journey was performed on foot and through a country inhabited by the Indian and the buffalo. His anecdotes of this

journey and the valuable lessons he drew from his observations, afforded many an hour's profitable entertainment.

On the 12th of December he started homeward, going by way of Sacramento and San Francisco. He took passage on the steamer Chesapeake on the 30th of January 1851. On account of contrary winds he was on the sea eleven days. At Trinidad and Salmon he remained several months. On the 22d of October he left Trinidad for Panama, thence to San Juan, New Orleans and Havana, Cuba. After enduring many privations and hardships he reached home in December 1851.

In the spring of 1853 he left home on his second trip to California, remaining there six years. After his return he lived one year in Ohio and then moved to La-Grange Co., Ind., where he lived one year, moving to Elkhart Co., five miles

south of Elkhart. In the fall of 1870 he moved to Elkhart, entering the employ of the Mennonite Publishing Co., (then J. F. Funk & Bro.), on the 19th of September, remaining in the employ of the same until his death, serving as proof reader and editor of the "Words of Cheer." His exactness and carefulness in details eminently fitted him for the work in which he was so long engaged.

Two years ago he was afflicted with lagrippe, from the effects of which he never entirely recovered, being continually harassed with a cough, and gradually his almost iron constitution gave way, rheumatism also setting in at times. His clock-like regularity at his post continued, however, and his genial "good morning" to the employees as he passed them on his way through the building up to his desk, as well as his sociable qualities endeared him to all. About New Year's the employees combined and presented him with a fine office chair as a token of their esteem for "Uncle Joseph," as he was called. That he was deeply susceptible of such kindly recognition was shown by his emotion as he expressed his thanks and good wishes to the donors. . . .

A few days before his death he desired his Sunday-school class to come to him, which request was gladly complied with. It was an affecting scene as he took by the hand one after another of the boys whom he had so faithfully taught and gave them kind advice and admonished them to live and labor for God that their lives might be useful and their labors a lasting benefit to themselves and others. He also sent a message to all the readers of the "Words of Cheer," for whose welfare he seemed at all times to be deeply interested. He desired every one that came to see him, to come up to his bedside, shake hands and speak to him. He expressed an implicit confidence in God and his only hope and trust was in Jesus Christ as his Savior. Bro. J. F. Funk was sent for just as he was closing the services at the church on Sunday, August 21st; when he came to him and he asked him if he should pray with him, he answered in the affirmative, and when the prayer was concluded he responded with a hearty "Amen." About an hour later he calmly fell asleep. He was a faithful and devoted Christian and a member of the church in Elkhart ever since its first organization. He also was a zealous worker in the Sunday school, and a faithful helper in every work to promote the cause of Christ and his church.

He was buried on the 24th at the Olive meeting-house. Services were held by J. S. Coffman and J. F. Funk at the meeting-house in Elkhart, and by J. F. Funk at the Olive meeting-house from the

text Rev. 14:13, selected by himself. He leaves a sorrowing companion and nine brothers and sisters to mourn his departure. Peace to his ashes.

## The Amish in Center County Pennsylvania

JOHN A. HOSTETLER

We shall never know what attracted the early Amish settlers to Halfmoon Valley in Center County one hundred and fifty years ago, but we definitely know that they moved there as early as 1804 and remained there as late as 1840. Amish residents of Mifflin County have known that a settlement was located in Halfmoon (Township and Valley) many years ago, but who lived there and when has never been established. A careful examination of the Center County courthouse records at Bellefonte reveals that at least eight different Amishmen owned land in Halfmoon. These were: John Yoder, Henry Yoder, Joseph Yoder, Sr., Joseph Yoder, Christian Yoder, Jacob Yoder, Christian Kaufman, and Isaac Kaufman.

The assessment list of 1804 of Halfmoon Township was the first to include in it names of Amish persons. This list includes the following names and evaluation of property: (1) Henry Yoder, land valued at 4,050, 3 horses 120, 2 cows 32; (Joseph Yoder, land 4,101, sawmill 150, 4 horses 200, four cows 48; (3) Christian Yoder, land 3,700, 3 horses 150, 5 cows 80; Joseph Yoder, Sr., land 2,880, 4 horses 120, 3 cows 48.

A record of land and other purchases by persons with familiar Amish names, and who presumably were Amish, is listed below as found in the county recorder's office. The earliest record of land purchased found among the registry of deeds was in 1813, but we know from the paragraph above that this was by no means the first land purchased by Amish. Since the county was organized in the year 1800, it is possible that the records were recorded with the state or some other regional office at that time. It is highly probable that they moved here during the year 1803, since the assessments include their names during 1804. 1805, (October 18)

John Yoder of Kishacoquillas Valley purchased from Philip Berger of Potter Township, Center County, numerous artifacts at a public sale for which he paid \$92.

1813, (December 16)

Joseph Yoder, Jr., of Armagh Township, Mifflin County, purchased from Alexander Stewart and wife of Halfmoon Township, Center County, a tract of land, the number of acres not given, for \$4,860.

1815, (January 27)

Joseph Yoder of Halfmoon Township purchased from John Lewis deceased of the same township 130 acres for \$6,990.

1818, (May 14)

Joseph Yoder, Sr., of Halfmoon Township purchased from Andrew Thompson and wife of Halfmoon Township 50 acres for \$1,850.

1819, (March 10)

Jacob Yoder of Henderson Township, Huntingdon County, Pa., purchased from Christian Yoder and wife of Halfmoon Township 50 acres for \$5,681.59.

1826, (March 28)

Joseph Yoder of Halfmoon Township purchased from Christian King and wife of Halfmoon Township 179 acres for \$3,000.

1826, (November 20)

Joseph Yoder of Halfmoon Township purchased from Joseph Thompson of West Township, Huntingdon County, Pa., two-seventh share of an estate worth \$616.

1827, (March 21)

Joseph Yoder of Halfmoon Township purchased from Rebecca Hamilton of Halfmoon Township one-seventh part of an estate for \$50.

1827, (November 16)

John Yoder of Warier Mark Township, Huntingdon County, Pa., purchased from Henry Sherer of Halfmoon Township one-fourth part of all mineral benefits—any kind of gold or silver, ore, copper, lead, or any other . . . belonging to him. Christian Hostetler served as witness.

1830, (April 1)

Jonathan Yoder of Halfmoon Township purchased from John Kreider of the same township 104 acres for \$1,000.

1831, (January 5)

John Yoder of Halfmoon Township purchased from Samuel McDowell a water right for value received. Yoder also purchased from the same party on the same date 101 acres for \$3,500.

1831, (April 1)

John Yoder of Halfmoon Township purchased from John Gray of the same township a water right for \$1.

1834, (March 13)

Christian Kaufman of Halfmoon Township purchased from Jonathan McDowell of the same township 113 acres for \$900.

1838, (March 27)

John Rowin of Halfmoon Township purchased from Christian Kaufman 103 acres for \$677.50.

1840, (March 27)

Abdenego Stephens purchased from Isaac Kauffman of Halfmoon Township 179 acres for \$7,000.

The direct cause of the breakdown and decline of the settlement is not known. From indirect sources we learn that it was probably due to extreme isolation, limited marriageable opportunity, and the sparse opportunity for expansion in productive farming. The last Amish member to sell land according to the registry of deeds was Isaac Kaufman, March 27, 1840. The Amish moved to Mifflin County in the Kishacoquillas Valley, to Lost Creek in Juniata County, and probably to other parts of Pennsylvania. Their place of origin before coming to Halfmoon Valley is not known, but they probably came from the same source as other settlers in Mifflin County—Lancaster, Berks, and Union counties.

The community was located west of the present-day hamlet of Stormstown. Their burial site remains to this day and may be found near a grove of oak trees on the Clyde Beck farm, south of the main highway, about four miles west of Stormstown. Only a very few old sunken grave markers remain, and there are no inscriptions on them, as ordinary sandstones were used. It is not known how many persons were buried or when they died or how old they were at death. A small monument was erected on the burial site by John K. Yoder and Ben Byler of Kishacoquillas Valley, Mifflin County, on November 14, 1937. The inscription on the stone reads:

Burial site of the early Amish Mennonite settlers of the 18th century [sic, 19th century]. Family names, Yoder, Kauffman, Byler, Renno. This memorial erected by the friends of the deceased.

Joseph W. Yoder in *Rosanna of the Amish* (1940), Chapter III, states that Rosanna, the daughter of Irish Catholic parents, was adopted by Elizabeth Yoder of Halfmoon Valley. Rosanna was raised here but later moved with her parents to Juniata and Mifflin counties.

There are at this writing three Amish families, consisting of 24 souls, living in Center County at the eastern part of the county, in Brush Valley about nine miles northeast of Center Hall. They purchased farms here and arrived here with their families on August 25, 1949, from Enon Valley in Lawrence County, Pa. The

family heads are Pre. Jonathan Hostetler, Pre. Jonathan Byler, and Deacon Noah Hostetler. It is believed that more may join the settlement soon. It will be worth while to note the development of the new colony, whether they, unlike their religious forebears of 150 years ago in the same county, can overcome the factors of isolation, limited social contacts, and limited agrarian potential.

Lemont, Pa.

## Reminiscences of B. W. Bare

(Among the early Mennonites in Marion County, Kansas, were Noah Good and Benjamin Bare and their families. See "The Twenty-Three Mile Furrow" in October, 1949, *MENNONITE HISTORICAL BULLETIN* and "Westward Ho—1884" in the present issue. The "Reminiscences" of B. W. Bare have been edited freely to present his recollections in smooth English. The original copy has recently been deposited in the Mennonite Church Archives by Bare's daughter, Mrs. E. B. Burkhart, Goshen, Indiana.—M. G.)

I was born in Columbiana County, Ohio, on August 25, 1838. In 1842 I immigrated with my parents to Putnam County, Ohio, a distance of 200 miles. We saw only one railroad in those 200 miles; that was at Tiffin, Ohio. We lived in Putnam County thirteen years and there was no railroad in the county when we left, although there was one under construction. I taught school there in the summer when I was eighteen years old. There was a congregation there of the Swiss Mennonites. They were very plain, wearing hooks and eyes. They lived mostly in log houses. . . . After a while they put up good houses and bank barns. . . . When the bends were all together the preacher would preach a short sermon and pray. When the building was up they would hoist the owner and all the hands. Some took it patiently. Some ran away and some wanted to fight.

In the spring of 1857 I went to Elkhart County, Indiana, and worked there over the summer. In the fall I went back to Ohio and in about four weeks we moved to Indiana. While I was there I went to Waterloo County, Ontario, and was there over summer. I also went to the Niagara Falls. I attended a term in the medical college in Cincinnati, Ohio. When I was out I was short of money and had to go to work. On the 22nd of March, 1857, I started from Goshen, Indiana, to go to Nebraska, stopping at Chicago over night. That night there was a heavy snow storm and the cars could not run through. So I went to Sterling, Illinois, and worked there six months for \$20.00 a month. In

the fall I went to Council Bluffs. The fare to there was \$17.00 and \$1.75 bed and breakfast. From there I went on the train to Nebraska City. I do not remember what the fare was there. From there I went by stage to Clarinda, Iowa; the fare was \$5.00.

At Clarinda I worked one month for \$20.00. On February 2, 1868, I was married to Magdalena Good and stayed with my wife's folks that summer and helped tend the farm. In the spring of 1869 we moved to Clarinda. I mixed mortar the next summer. The grasshoppers were there and times were hard. That fall we went to Elkhart County, Indiana. There was a split in the church when we got there. The bishop was bitterly opposed to Sunday school and English preaching and that was what caused the split. In the spring of 1872 my wife's folks moved from Page County, Iowa, to Marion County, Kansas. And in the fall of the same year we came from Elkhart County, Indiana, to Kansas and lived that winter with my wife's folks in Marion. I cut stove wood that winter for \$1.00 a cord. In the spring my wife's folks moved on to their claim. I mixed mortar that summer for \$1.50 a day and we kept boarders for \$4.00 a week.

In the spring of 1874 we moved on our claim. Then hard times commenced. That fall my father-in-law and I were putting up hay for a man who had a large peach orchard loaded with peaches. One day at noon he said he would not take \$900 for his peaches. That afternoon a great cloud of grasshoppers came from the northwest and destroyed all his peaches. The wheat was gathered in but they destroyed everything else. The people had to have help. The people in the east were very liberal in giving them provisions. We lived four miles from Marion. I had to go there to work. I went a mile above Marion to cut wood, leaving in the morning and coming back in the evening. I could not make more than 50 cents a day cutting the tough elm wood. Our children had no shoes. They dug a ditch near Marion in the river bottom and got on stone. I worked there six days for \$1.50 a day. Then we got shoes for the children.

We had many dry seasons. I would have left but I was stuck fast so that I could not go. Finally in 1896 after we had been in Kansas 24 years, my two boys started for Jasper County, Missouri. They put out 70 acres of wheat and then came back to Kansas, and in four weeks we moved to Missouri. That was a very hard winter. The 70 acres of wheat made 100 bushels of wheat and cheat. Corn was a failure—only small nubbins. After that we were more prosperous. In 1907 my two

boys started for Oklahoma with nine horses, two wagons, and a buggy. After they got there my wife and I and our daughter Martha went on the train. I bought a place there of 40 acres, made improvements on the place, paid a lot of interest, and went broke so that I have nothing. From there we moved to Harper, Kansas. My wife died April 30, 1919. Now I am in Hesston, Kansas, over 86 years old and in feeble health.

September, 1924.

B. W. Bare.

*Abriß der Geschichte der Mennoniten.* By C. H. Wedel. Newton, Kansas: School Publishing House of Bethel College, 1900-1904. Four volumes, 750 pp. ABRISZ DER GESCHICHTE DER MENNONITEN

A general history in German of the Mennonites, in four brief volumes covering all told approximately about 750 pages, written by Cornelius H. Wedel, President of Bethel College, and published by the college in 1900.

Volume I devotes itself entirely to the origin and growth of the Apostolic Church, and the later pre-Reformation evangelical sects and groups, of which the Waldensians were the most important. The author belonged to that school of Mennonite historians who believed that Mennonitism was largely an expansion of earlier Waldensian and other evangelical religious groups.

Volume II deals with the rise of Anabaptism to the time of Menno Simons in Switzerland, Germany, Moravia, and Holland.

The other two volumes continue briefly the story of Mennonite growth, and development in Europe and America, up to 1900, written largely from the standpoint of the American Russian Mennonites. The main portion of space is given to that Mennonite line which runs from Holland to Prussia, then to Russia, and finally the migration of some thousands to America in 1874, and the years following: though strangely enough not much space is allotted to that migration itself.

In the section of America most attention is given to the early migrations, and the expansion across the continent of the early settlements. Not much space is given the Canadian Mennonites. The General Conference, too, to which most of the Russian immigrants later allied themselves, is given preference over other branches of the denomination.

The book is well written, designed originally for classroom use, with convenient chapter and paragraph headings. It was not without interest, however, to the general reading public. For many years it was a standard and almost the

sole authentic history on the subject among the German-speaking Mennonites of America. It was never translated into English. With the passing of the German language among the younger generation and the appearance of numerous other histories in the English language, it has lost some of its earlier popularity.

Written in 1948 by C. Henry Smith.

## Preserving the Landmarks

In the February, 1951, issue of the *Mennonite Community* is an article by Daniel R. Heatwole on the Christian Herr House. Mr. Heatwole, of Mennonite ancestry, feels that this old House should be renovated and made into a shrine by the Mennonites. The House dates from 1719 and is a good example of the medieval stone cabins that were built in early Pennsylvania.

Local historical societies of the church can be influential in preserving the "ancient landmarks." Young people's gatherings and programs could be appropriately held at such places.

## Martyrs' Mirror Sales Are Gratifying

Since July, 1950, nearly 2,500 copies of *Martyrs' Mirror* have been sold by the Mennonite Publishing House. So gratifying has been the sale of this Mennonite classic that a new printing of 3,500 has been ordered. The fine sale of the *Mirror* exceeded expectations and shows a healthy interest in the treasures of the past.

The pamphlet on the Ephrata *Martyrs' Mirror* is well received in circles outside the Mennonite Church. Newsstands and stores in the vicinity of Ephrata and Lancaster are selling the pamphlet. Dr. Preston Barba, Head of the German Department of Muhlenberg College at Allentown, Pa., has referred to the pamphlet in his *S. Pennsylvania Deutsch Eck* of the *Allentown Morning Call*.

Dr. Raymond W. Albright, Professor of Church History at Evangelical School of Theology at Reading, Pa., and secretary of the American Society of Church History, writes:

"Thank you so much for sending the *Mirror* booklet; by all means do let me have ten or a dozen copies if you can spare that many. I shall see to it that they are well placed."

Sample copies of this pamphlet are free. Regular price is 25¢. Order from the Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pa.

## Mennonite Missions in Virginia

Last November we had the privilege of holding a series of meetings for two weeks at the Gospel Hill Church, at the head of a small valley in the Allegheny range of mountains.

Although these people were entire strangers to me, yet I found them to be kind, sociable, and hospitable. They are generally poor, living in very humble homes, not the modern comforts which many of us enjoy, nor convenient vehicles to go to church. Most of them, men, women and children would walk, some of them as far as three or four miles.

They also seemed to enjoy having us come to visit them in their homes, one or more of the men finding time to go with me across the mountains and ridges and valleys into the homes of these people, where we always found the latch strings of their doors hanging outside, and where they seemingly enjoyed to have us take the liberty to sing a song, read a Scripture lesson and have prayer with them.

I have never seen in our larger congregations where there is much wealth and where they enjoy all the modern conveniences and comforts of home life, with luxuries and amusements added, such a spirit of contentment manifested as among these people. Also their children and young people seemed happy and contented in their homes along the mountain sides, or as they walked to and from the meetings, over the rocky road and crossing the running stream of water, frequently singing the simple Gospel songs they had learned.

I was made to realize that the brethren of Shenandoah valley have been doing a noble work among these people. More than 30 and 40 years ago the older ministers of whom some have gone to their final reward, have been carrying the Gospel to these mountaineers, traveling mostly on horseback across the mountains and valleys, spending days, weeks and months preaching the Gospel at various places along these mountains. However, they did not have many visible results, until five or six years ago when they organized Sunday schools among them, younger brethren accompanying the minister to assist in the work and having regular appointments for worship. Since then churches have been organized and houses of worship erected.—C. Z. Y. in *Gospel Herald*.—from April, 1912, PENN GERMANY, Cleona and Lititz, Pa.



